

Homeopathic Treatments On The Farm

by Jane Chase, Smugglers Hill Farm

As we watch the seasons change from summer to fall, pasture growth slows. We begin the yearly transition back to the barn and stored feed. I reminded myself to look at last year's health records to see what problems may rear their ugly heads...

Bloat and Colic in the fall? Yes, in the fall. Lush fall grass can be as dangerous as the flush of spring grass.

Pastures change with some plants becoming more toxic as they head out with their seeds and berries.

Aggressive cows may graze plants they previously ignored while the good grass was plentiful. We start to increase grain feeding and introduce the new forage produced from this year's harvest. Our cows have to adjust to these changes as do the micro flora of the cows' stomachs. The following information may help cows that have symptoms of bloat or colic during this transition.

Bloat can manifest in various forms of illness, a gaseous bloat or a frothy bloat. Both are serious cause for concern and need immediate treatment. First determine which type of bloat the cow is suffering from, both will display the typical bloated left side, hard and tight. Each, if left untreated will eventually make breathing difficult. Some cows will express signs of distress with anxious looks on their faces while others may initially act like it's no big deal, it is a big deal. The frothy bloat cow will also exhibit the additional indicator of drooling frothy saliva. Both digestive forms will show a slight or sub-normal body temperature. Other problems such as impaction or even cancer can cause bloat symptoms; call a vet if the condition does not respond to treatment.

Nux Vomica 30c potency is used for most gaseous bloat cases we've seen on our farm. Even with calves that have eaten too much, too fast. Like most acute illnesses we treat, we begin fast and furious with multiple dosing as often as every 5-10 minutes during the first half hour of treatment. Then slow down to dosing every hour or two until relief is noticeable. Most cases are resolved in the first hour or less. You can dose either directly into the mouth or intra-vaginally. Remember not to touch the pellets with your hands, dispense them into a clean container that is easy to empty into their mouths or put pellets into a clean syringe to distribute in water, intra-

vaginal or even intra-nasal. We separate these animals from the herd and offer them a diet of dry hay, kelp and probiotic powder for a day or so.

Apis Mellifica 6c or 30c potency is indicated with most frothy bloat cases we've seen on our farm. Dosing again in quick repetition as above. We also separate these animals and offer dry hay, kelp and probiotic powder.

Colic is easy to recognize, the animal is off feed, highly agitated, slightly bloated and in obvious pain. We've seen a few different presentations of symptoms with colic cases.

Sometimes you can see the contractions of the gut and hear the rumbling or gurgling of the intestine.

Podophyllum 30c is my remedy of choice for most cases. At first these animals seem, to the untrained eye, like they are going nuts. Most will kick at their abdomen even while standing, which isn't long because they lay down almost immediately. They continue kicking, sometimes rolling and even stretching their hind legs out behind them, frog like. None of these positions are continuous, as the struggle for relief is non-stop. Restraint can be difficult but once you have control, start dosing rapidly. Dose every 5-10 minutes for the first 30 minutes, then once every hour or so for a couple of hours. Relief should come just as quickly as the onset of the symptoms.

Colocynthis 30c is another colic remedy for cases that may include spurts of yellow diarrhea with the rolling and kicking at the abdomen. Animals may also stretch and arch their back seeking relief. Dose rapidly for the first half hour, then once every half hour for a few doses until relief is evident.

Observation of all symptoms displayed by the suffering animal is key when choosing the homeopathic remedy needed. If you don't get results quickly, call your vet, these indicators can be secondary to more serious conditions.

The examples are from my personal experiences with our organic dairy herd. I'm not a classic homeopath or a traditional homeopath, but rather a farmer with a passion for homeopathy. Call me a practical homeopath, always practicing.

Jayne Chase farms with her husband Jonathan and hired man Jeff Mason. They milk 115 organic Jerseys and Holsteins on the Vermont-Quebec border. Raised by an herbalist, Jayne became interested in homeopathy after attending an organic growers meeting in Michigan during the 1980's.

Observation of all symptoms displayed by the suffering animal is key when choosing the homeopathic remedy needed.